SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Sir, I have only one query. ..(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. ..(*Interruptions*).. Please resume you seat. ...(*Interruptions*)... This question is over. ...(*Interruptions*)... Question No. 224, the hon. Member is absent. Question No. 225.

*224. [The Questioner (Shri Tarini Kanta Roy) was absent. For answer *vide* Page 222.]

Rail accidents in the country

*225. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of rail accidents reported across the country during the last year;

(b) the total loss of life and property due to these accidents;

(c) the compensation paid to the affected families of the deceased in these accidents;

(d) whether it is a fact that many cases of compensation are still pending in the Ministry and if so, how they are likely to be disposed of;

(e) what are the reasons for these tragedies reported;

(f) how many persons in the Ministry found negligent in duties have been brought to book; and

(g) what steps are being taken to prevent such accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) There were 195 consequential train accidents on Indian Railways during 2006-07 in which 208 persons lost their lives and 402 sustained injuries. Loss of railway property on account of these accidents has been estimated to be Rs. 31.93 crore. Compensation is paid only after a decree is awarded on a claim filed in this regard in the Railway Claims Tribunal. So far Rs. 36 lakhs have been paid as compensation for claims filed in respect of these accidents.

(d) No, Sir. Accident compensation claims are adjudicated by Railway Claims Tribunal which is a quasi judicial body. However, Railways have taken steps to speed up settlement of compensation claims.

(e) and (f) Out of 195 consequential train accidents during 2006-07, 85 were attributed to failure of railway staff, 84 due to failure of persons other that railway staff, 9 due to equipment failure, 8 due to sabotage, 7 were incdental, 1 due to combination of factors and I could not be established. During 2006-07, disciplinary action was taken against 200 railway employees held responsible for accidents.

(g) All possible steps are undertaken on a continuing basis to prevent accidents. These measures include timely replacement of over-aged assets, adoption of suitable technologies for up-gradation and maintenance of track, rolling stock, signaling and interlocking systems, safety drives and inspections at regular intervals to monitor and educate staff for observance of safe practices. As a result, there has been a declining trend in the number of accidents from 473 in 2000-01 to 234 in 2005-06 and further to 195 in 2006-07.

DR. V. MAITREYAN: Mr. Chairman, the reply by the Minister shows that a large number of rail accidents occur due to human errors. In fact, 169 out of 195 accidents occurred due to

human error. But, there is no mention about the number of accidents that occurred due to unmanned level crossings. What is the total number of unmanned level crossings across the country, and, in Tamil Nadu in particular? What is the number of accidents occurring due to these unmanned level crossings in the country and in Tamil Nadu? I want to know the number of overbridges that are being contemplated to be built this year across the country and in Tamil Nadu. What steps is the Ministry going to undertake to check these accidents which occur due to these unmanned level crossings?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, I quite agree and share the concern of the hon. Member. Today, the problem faced by the Railways, especially, in respect of accidents is of the unmanned level corssings. We have about 34,000 level crossings, of which 16,000 and odd are manned crossings and about 18,000 are unmanned level corssings.

Sir, as I mentioned, these unmanned level crossings are causing concern. But we have now evolved a policy to see to it that unmanned level crossings are increasingly manned. This is number one. We have also, according to the volume of traffic, provided for grade separators, namely, ROB and RUB. On the remaioning unmanned level crossings, we are now applying the visibility criteria and we are also providing for manning of those eligible crossings. Sir, for manning, the capital cost works out to about Rs.10 to 12 lakh and the operating cost for every crossing works out to three lakh of rupees per annum. If I want to convert all of them into manned crossings, I need about Rs. 2156 crore as capital cost, and, to run them, to man them, the recurring cost works out to about 539 crores of rupees a year.

DR. V. MAITREYAN: Sir, there is a surplus of Rs. 25,000 crores. ...*(Interruptions)*.... There is a surplus.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a minute. Let him finish.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, 36 per cent of the accidents in India take place on the unmanned level crossings, but, if you take the fatalities also into account, 70 per cent of the fatalities are there on the unmanned level crossing. So, what we are doing is, in all those places, we are upgrading the infrastructural facilities namely, grading, rumbling, improving whistling by drivers, train-warning systems so that the road-user is cautioned. We are doing all these things. Now, as far as this particular question of the hon. Member regarding the number of manned and unmanned crossings in Tamil Nadu and the efforts that are being made to stop these accidents, etc. are concerned, I will furnish the information to the hon. Member separately.

DR. V. MAITREYAN: Sir, the reply of the hon. Minister mentions that the large number of accidents occur due to human erros. My question is: how many of them are due to human error and how many of them are due to human negligence? And, whether the Government will propose to appoint a Committee to study this aspect and give suggestions so that the field staff can be trained to handle these things in a more human way.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the percentage of accidents caused due to human error on the part of the Railway staff constitutes about 43.59 per cent. ...*(Interruptions)*....

श्री के॰ बी॰ शणप्पा: रेल मंत्री यहां क्यों आना नहीं चाहते हैं ....(व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please resume your place.

SHRI K.B. SHANAPPA: What is wrong? Why is he not coming here? ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not disturb. ...*(Interruptions)*.... Please observe the established procedures. ...*(Interruptions)*....

श्री प्यारे लाल खंडेलवाल: हम भी देख रहे हैं कि लालू जी कभी जवाब देने नहीं आते हैं। रेल मंत्री जी को कभी-कभी आना चाहिए...(व्यवधान)

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, I have a small submission. If he is ill, ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will take your points after the Question Hour. ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, if he is ill, then there is no problem. I want to know whether he has given in writing, taken permission, that on his Question day, he will be absent. On the Question day, the Cabinet Minister should be present here. ...*(Interruptions)*.... Why is he not present? ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not disturb. ...*(Interruptions)*.... There are established procedures for these matters. ...*(Interruptions)*.... Please do not disturb. ...*(Interruptions)*.... Please go ahead. ...*(Interruptions)*.... I have a letter. As per the established procedures of the House, ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, how many times you have permitted him? ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am afraid, that is not a question that you can ask. ...*(Interruptions)*.... It is incorrect. ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Every time you will permit him. ...*(Interruptions)*.... You should not permit him every time. ...*(Interruptions)*....

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Ministers of the Government are Ministers of the Government authorised to answer on behalf of their Ministries. That is exactly what is being done. ...*(Interruptions)*....

श्री के० बी० शणप्पा: एक बार, दो बार होता है, बार-बार नहीं आने से कैसे चलेगा....(व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति: आप मेहरबानी करके बैठ जाइए ...(व्यवधान) Please proceed with the answer. ...*(Interruptions)*....

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, when the Minister of State is answering, why are they interrupting? ...*(Interruptions)*....

श्री सभापति: आप मेहरबानी करके बैठ जाइए ....(व्यवधान)

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, as far as the question regarding failure on the part of the Railway staff is concerned, I would like to say that at the level of the recruitment itself, we are taking all kinds of aptitude tests, etc., so that the right persons are selected. Even after recruitment, a number of training courses at the induction level as well as refresher courses at periodical intervals are conducted. Various other measures are also being undertaken so that the running staff is not negligent of their duties and to see that the skill and performance of the Railway staff is all the time upgraded so that such accidents do not occur. For the people other than the Railway staff, that is, the road users and others we undertake awareness campaigns to make them how to cross the unmanned level corssings. In fact, the Motor Vehicle Act provides certain guidelines to be observed by the drivers. But they do not observe them. That is why these accidents take place. So, we are taking aggressive campaigns to educate the people to make them aware. So, in this way we are trying to minimise the number of accidents on account of human failure on the part of Railways as well as the non-railway side.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, I feel at home with the Chairman as well as the Minister. It is very much gratifying to note that the number of accidents is coming down. From the report, we see that the total number accidents is coming down. While we are happy on that aspect,

it is also seen from the report that about 80-90 per cent of the accidents are due to human failure, not because of mechanical failure or other things. If most of the accidents are because of human failure, I would like the Ministry to have more and more thrust and concentration on the persons who are involved in human failure. The Minister is saying that they are concentrating on that aspect. On the other hand, there are no all-out efforts to train them, to educate them, to create awareness among them. What is the real thrust that you are giving to reduce the number of accidents, mainly concentrating on the human area?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the hon. Member has rightly pointed out that the number of accidents has come down. The number of accidents, which were 415 in 2001-02, had drastrically come down to 195 during the last year, that is, 2006-07, and, this year, at the end of February, the number was 184. This is all because of upgradation in technology and upgradation of human resources. I have already mentioned how we are going to tackle the situation by improving the quality of recruitment, undertaking referesher courses and crash courses, modernising the training refresher courses and crash courses, modernising the training centres, undertaking periodical medical examinations, introducing breathalysers, computerised management filling the vacancies in the 'safety' category on priority, etc., etc. So, a number of measures are being taken. But the uncontrollable factor is the public, the road users. As I mentioned just now, we are undertaking awareness programmes to educate them. This is not the problem in India alone. It is a universal problem. We do not find anywhere in the world a foolproof system in which the unmanned level crossings will not be subject to accidents unless people are made aware how seriously they should cross the unmanned level crossings. However, the number of such accidents has come down. Of course, zero level may not be possible, but, at least, we can try to reduce the number of accidents.

SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Sir, I would like to know whether the hon. Railway Minister is aware of the fact that after every major disaster a Commission is appointed. If you take into account all the recommendations, made by such commissions, they are about 2,200. One of the main proposals is to modernise the railway safety system with updated technology. I would like to know from the Minister, out of those 2,200 recommendations, how many recommendations have been implemented to avoid the train disasters.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, many Committees like the Wanchoo Committee and all others have gone into this aspect. The latest was the Railway Safety Review Committee, appointed in 1998. It was headed by Justice Khanna. In fact he had made about 278 recommendations. Of course, the hon. Member wants the details of the 2,200 recommendations, which were made over a period of about 60 years. I will definitely furnish this information to him. But the latest being this, out of 278 recommendations, the Railways has accepted 240 of them. *(Interruptions)* What I am saying is that I will definitely furnish those particulars. But I would like to inform about the latest recommendations, which are under operation. So, out of 278 recommendations, 240 have been accepted, 198 have been implemented, and 38 recommendations have not been accepted. And this Safety Review Committee is responsible for improvement in safety. Out of Rs. 17,000 crores, Rs. 12,000 crores will be from the Finance Minister and Rs. 5,000 crores from the Railways. This has been helping us to upgrade our track structure, rolling stock, signalling, etc., which has been responsible for the drastic reduction in accidents. I shall furnish the other details that he wanted, Sir.

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Sir, my question relates to part (e) of the reply of the hon. Minister; and, in view of its importance, I would have appreciated had the hon. Railway Minister himself been present. You have talked to all the new technology you are seeking to

adopt to prevent railway accidents. There has been a provision of a big Railway Safety Fund. How has that Fund been utilised? That is my first question. Secondly, you have liberalised freight load on freight trains; that would lead to impact on the tracks. How are you going to take care of that? Is overload on the track a problem giving rise to accidents? These are my two queries to which I wish to seek answers.

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, these are good questions put by the hon. Member and I would definitely like to inform him. Sir, so far as the Railway Safety Fund is concerned, this will be utilised for replacement and renewal of 16538 kilometres of railway track of which we have done about 16223 kms., that is, about 98 per cent of it has been done. Then, 2286 bridges will be renewed and reconstructed. We have done 2087, that is, about 91.2 per cent of the work has been done. As for signalling, signals at 1448 stations were needed to be done, of which 1222 have been done, that is, 77 per cent of the work has been done. We were given a six-year period for completion but some work remained to be completed and so one year more was given. So, by the end of this year, we will be able to complete almost the entire renewal work as well as utilise the funds. Then, you have raised a query about increase in the axle load having an impact on the track and how much of the safety aspect is being taken care of. In fact, when we thought of increasing the axle load, we took care by not straightaway implementing it but gave it a trial run of six months on those routes where we had got increased load, which means, the carrying capacity plus 6+2 or CC+8+2 is the increased axle load, the additional weight and tonnage which has to be carried. We found that the tracks and the bridges could bear it and that is why we have put it into operation. The point is that we in the Railways do not care for the income but for the safety of the passengers as well as the safety of the goods. I assure the hon. Member that we will not take such a hasty step in introducing the additional weight without taking care of the renewal, replacement of the tracks, the rolling stock bridges, etc.

इस्पात का उपभोक्ता विक्रय मूल्य

*226. **श्री राम जेठमलानी:**
डॉ मुरली मनोहर जोशी:††

क्या इस्पात मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि गत वर्षों में देश में इस्पात का उपभोक्ता विक्रय मूल्य निरन्तर बढ़ता जा रहा है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो अप्रैल, 2004 और दिसंबर, 2007 के अंत में देश में इस्पात की विभिन्न किस्मों का औसत मूल्य कितना-कितना था; और

(ग) उक्त अवधि के दौरान इस्पात निर्माण में प्रयुक्त होने वाले सभी पदार्थों की कीमतों में कितनी-कितनी वृद्धि हुई है?

इस्पात मंत्री (श्री राम विलास पासवान): (क) से (ग) एक विवरण सदन के पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

विवरण

(क) पिछले कुछ वर्षों में इस्पात उत्पादों के खुदरा मूल्यों में विभिन्न उतार-चढ़ाव आए हैं।

(ख) अप्रैल, 2004 से दिसम्बर, 2007 तक की अवधि के दौरान मुम्बई खुदरा बाजार में इस्पात की विभिन्न किस्मों के औसत मूल्य विवरण-I (नीचे देखिए) में दिए गए हैं।

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††सभा में यह प्रश्न डॉ मुरली मनोहर जोशी द्वारा पूछा गया।